



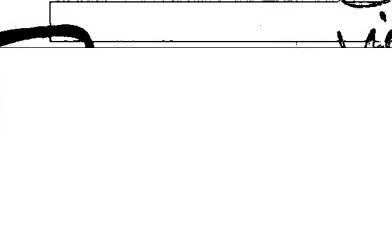
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Afghanistan Situation Report

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AFGHANISTAN SITUATION REPORT

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SA-7 EVASION TACTICS

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Recent guerrilla successes with SA-7 air defense missiles have prompted adoption of defensive maneuvers.

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NEW DEFENSE MINISTER

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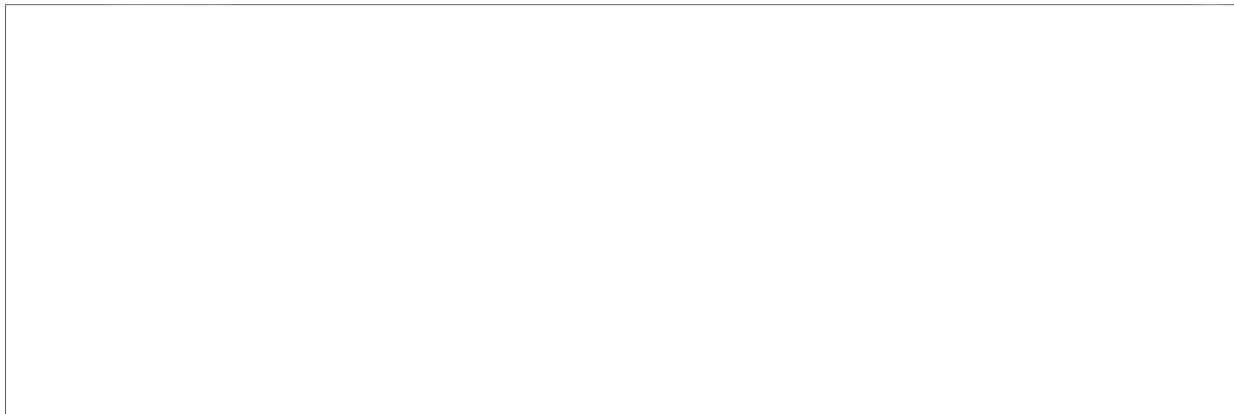
Major-General Nazar Muhammad has replaced Lieutenant-General Abdul Qader as Minister of Defense and Chief of the General Staff.

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SA-7 EVASION TACTICS

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The US Embassy in Kabul reports that all aircraft using Kabul International Airport are flying evasive maneuvers on takeoffs and landings to avoid insurgent antiaircraft missiles. The maneuvers emphasize sharp banking turns and steep ascents and descents over Kabul so that the aircraft do not fly at vulnerable altitudes outside the city limits. Military aircraft make extensive use of flares at lower altitudes to deflect heat-seeking missiles. Despite such measures, an MI-8 helicopter was shot down as it approached the airport on 26 November.

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Comment:

The insurgent SA-7 firings that damaged an Ariana DC-10 on 21 September and shot down a Soviet IL-76 military transport on 27 October probably were the impetus for the new measures. The insurgents have been using the hills around Kabul Airport to provide cover from which to shoot at aircraft as they land and take off. Resistance activity in Kabul has grown in recent months, and the insurgents may be able to infiltrate SA-7s into the city and offset the Soviet tactic.

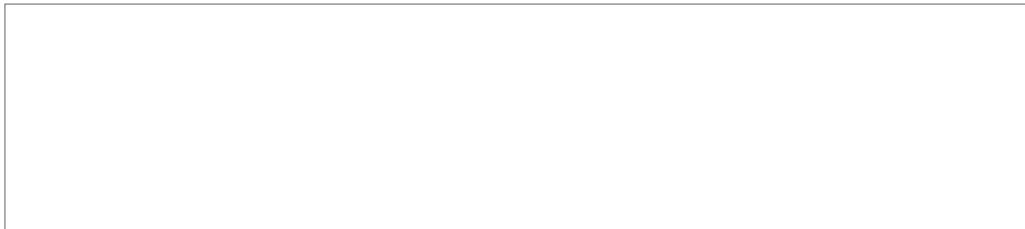
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NEW DEFENSE MINISTER

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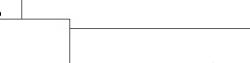
According to Kabul media, Major-General Nazar Muhammad has been named Minister of Defense and Chief of the General Staff, replacing Lieutenant-General Abdul Qader, who has been named First Vice Chairman of the Revolutionary Council.

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Comment:

Nazar Muhammad previously was the Air Force head and, since January 1984, the Armed Forces Chief of Staff. He is a member of the minority Khalq faction and is considered "hard" and "aggressive." Nazar Muhammad's appointment may be designed, in part, to improve morale in the middle ranks of the armed forces, which are dominated by Khalqis. Qader, though a member of neither faction, had favored Parchamis in promotions. Qader was probably replaced because of his lack of success in rebuilding the Afghan Army into an effective fighting force.

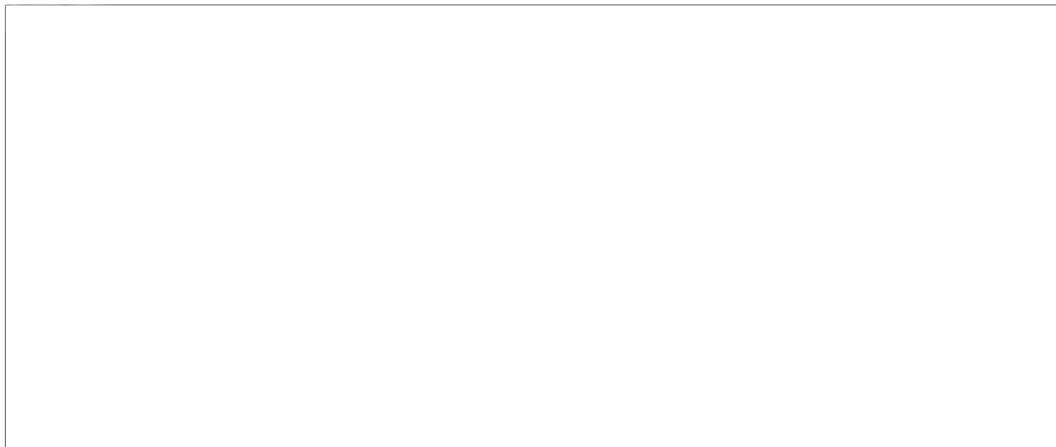
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-- Recently announced shifts of six department heads in the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs probably are tied to efforts to replace less ideological officers with those more aligned with the regime. [redacted]

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-- According to a source of the US Embassy in Kabul, an East European diplomat recently said the Soviets are determined to seal the Afghan border with Pakistan. He claimed that Soviet and Afghan forces already had closed 70 of 230 known insurgent border crossing routes. [redacted]

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-- Two Soviet soldiers captured in Afghanistan and interned in Switzerland for the past two years voluntarily returned to the USSR last month. Since May of this year, at least five former Soviet prisoners have been repatriated from Western Europe at their request. [redacted]

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